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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [ECON](#) [QA](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: QATAR LOOKS TO INCREASE COORDINATION WITH SAUDI  
ARABIA

Classified By: Ambassador Joseph E. LeBaron, for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

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(C) KEY POINTS  
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-- The Heir Apparent led the Qatari delegation to the December 15-17 Qatar-Saudi Joint Council on Coordination and will continue to chair these consultations on the Qatari side, which are expected to take place every year.

-- The discussions covered a wide range of bilateral interests: political, military, economic, and border demarcation, according to MFA Assistant Minister for Follow-up Affairs Mohamed Al-Rumaihi.

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(C) COMMENT  
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-- Al-Rumaihi referred to the discussions as "technical in nature," but clearly there is a strategic component (and direction) for lower-level discussions. Otherwise, Qatar's Heir Apparent, Prime Minister, and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs would not have attended.

-- The coordination between Qatar and its larger neighbor is further evidence that Qatar's relations with Saudi Arabia are improving. After an extended absence, Saudi Arabia posted an Ambassador to Doha earlier this year, and in December 2007 King Abdullah attended the GCC Summit in Doha.

End Key Points and Comment.

[¶1.](#) (C) Ambassador asked MFA Assistant Minister for Follow-up Affairs Mohamed Al-Rumaihi December 17 for his assessment of the Qatar-Saudi Joint Council on Coordination dialogue which was held in Saudi Arabia December 15-17. Al-Rumaihi responded that coordinating and implementing joint policies "in a wide range of bilateral interests at different levels" was the primary aim of the commission, which is headed on the Qatari side by the Heir Apparent, Shaykh Tamim.

[¶2.](#) (C) Al-Rumaihi said that the Prime Minister and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs accompanied the Heir Apparent to the meetings, which dealt with political, military, economic, border demarcation, air traffic and other issues. Al-Rumaihi described the discussions as "technical in nature." He said they are expected to take place once a year, alternating between both capitals.  
LeBaron